

1508/47.

THE
BOOK OF NATURE.

A
P O E M.



A

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Print

Chris^r Harvey

THE

B O O K

OF

N A T U R E.

A

P O E M.

A new dress sometimes makes an old truth more pleasing.

LYTTELTON.

D U B L I N :

Printed for JAMES WILLIAMS, Bookseller, in
Skinner-Row. M.DCC.LXXI.

Handwritten notes at the top of the page, possibly "The Book of the People".

THE
BOOK
OF
THE
PEOPLE



A new edition of this work is now being published.
Printed for JAMES WILKINS, Stationer, in
DUBLIN.

High-arching oaks, the beech and planting forest

~~These foliage trees, and form the woods of the~~

While on each hand the roses, woodbine, bay

And, almost, make a Paradise below!

THE

BOOK OF NATURE.

HOW wondrous the profusion pour'd around,
 Above, below!—With trees the hills are crown'd;
 With corn the vallies. In those verdant meads
 Behold the bleating flocks, the bounding steeds:
 Yon copious streams not only please the eye,
 But, stor'd with life, rich food for man supply.
 How full the concert from the neighb'ring trees?
 How fraught with odours blows the southern breeze?
 Spontaneous rise the lillies of the vale;
 The king-cup, primrose, violet, daffodil:

B

High-

High-arching o'er, the beech and plantaine spread
 Their foliage broad ; and form the noon-tide shade ;
 While on each hand the roses, woodbines, blow ;
 And, almost, make a Paradise below !

Hail ! hospitable shades, and lofty hills !
 Ye flow'rets gay ; ye chrystal, murm'ring rills !
 With what regret your calm delights I leave ?
 Oh ! how I wish retir'd with you to live !
 How swiftly fly the pleasing hours away ?
 How sweet with you to pass the summer's day,
 Respiring the soft air, the balmy gale
 That gently sweeps the flow'r-enamel'd dale.
 Where'er I look, new beauties strike my eyes,
 And bright variety around me lies !

But stay,—nor think that this delicious scene ;
 These groves, these brooks ; hills, vales, and meadows
 green,



Are

THE BOOK OF NATURE.

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Are to be view'd with such a selfish sight,
As objects only form'd for thy delight.
Think'ft thou yon sun, that gilds the western skies;
Or that full orb, which there thou seest rise
In silent majesty, were plac'd on high
Only to mark thy hours, and please thine eye;
Mature thy fruit; to light thee and to warm;
Recruit thy spirits, and thy senses charm?
All these, no doubt, were in th' intention join'd
Of their Creator; favour, to mankind,
One great end of creation; but, not sole;
For boundless Goodness comprehends the whole;
The raven asks, nor asks in vain, his share:
Whate'er or range the earth, or beat the air,
Or cut the liquid wave, partake the boon;
Nor think this world of wonders, all thy own.

Suppose some monarch makes a splendid feast;
And thou a welcome, though unworthy guest:

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If,—of meer pleasure—seated next the throne ?
 Would it be *thine*, to look contemptuous down
 On all below thee, as if only there,
 To make thy exaltation more appear ?
 To wait thy bidding ? fly at thy command ?
 And take their portion from thy scanty hand ?—
 'Tis to mistake thy province :—Thou wert meant,
 Not to preside ; but, humble and content,
 To share with others in the rich repast ;
 To serve them, in their need ; and, as thou hast
 In place the preference, be first in praise ;
 “ Give out the hymn ;” and lead the graceful lays ;
 While those around, unite in one glad voice ;
 And, though in various measures, all rejoice.

Thy station, and thy offices thus shewn ;
 And thou convinc'd, not for thy sake alone,
 Thy profit, pleasure,—rose this wond'rous frame,
 But for the honour of its Maker's name,

And

THE BOOK OF NATURE. 9

And good to myriads ;—safely may'st thou count
Thy blessings o'er ; and glory in th' amount ;
May'st view thy pastures whit'ned o'er with stocks ;
Thy wanton kidlings sporting on the rocks ;
Thy forests rise ; thy myrtles, roses, bloom ;
And, free indulge, in all their rich perfume ;
'Tis *Nature's Book* ; and, if but read aright,
Will set thy duty clearly in thy sight ;
Will lead thee upward to the one great source ;
And check thy head-long passions in their course :
A copious volume ; where each line displays
A subject for astonishment, and praise ;
Where Wisdom, Power, Goodness, Beauty, shine ;
And not a stroke but proves *the hand divine* :
There read attent ; employ thy studious hours ;
Hear Reason speak ; exert thy mental pow'rs ;
As many letters in this book are seen,
As there are flow'rs, or dew-drops on the green ;

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Trees on the hills, or herbage on the plains.
Whate'er on earth, or sea, or air contains :
These various letters meditation joins,
And different species into words combines :
From words thus form'd, a language will proceed,
So full, so plain, that, " he who runs may read ;"
While from vicissitude each period grows,
And changing seasons form a graceful close.

Behold a God in all !— nor let thy foot
Indignant, crush the snail, that marring thy fruit ;
Without advert'ing to its Maker's skill ;
And silent looking up, for leave to kill ;
Without the conscious thought how much beyond
Thy art, to frame ; thy pow'rs, to comprehend
The object thus submitted to thy will ;
And, strike reluctant, though allow'd to kill.

Whene'er

THE BOOK OF NATURE. II

Whene'er the flow'ry path thy feet shall lead,
In mazy windings through the verdant mead:
Whene'er thy steps, with musing silence, rove
Through the cool shade of some sequester'd grove:
Or when with head reclin'd, and vacant look,
Supine thou list'nest to the bubbling brook;
Can these no subject for thy thoughts supply?
Those flow'rs serve only to delight the eye?
That brook, the ear? That grove alone design'd,
Wherein to sit, and sooth the troubled mind? —
Enjoy thy flow'ry paths; thy purling streams;
Sequester'd groves, which scorn the noon-tide beams:
'Tis almost virtue to delight in these;
They find, or sure must leave, a soul in peace:
Frequent them often; but, not like the brute
That grazes nigh thee; happy, yet still mute.
Like thine, his privilege to range the mead;
Drink the cool stream; and sleep beneath the shade;

Would'st thou superior rise ? let grateful praise
Give proof of reason ; and to manhood raise :
And, while by appetite, or instinct led,
He seeks the grove, the stream, or flow'ry mead,
Let choice direct thee to th' impervious wood,
Whose awful gloom best speaks, *a present God* ;
And best prepares to meet ; — where, calm, serene,
May rise the suppliant pray'r ; or, joyful hymn :
Where retrospection holds her useful glass ;
And prudent foresight makes the future pass
In strict review, before the mental eye,
In Truth's white robe, unting'd with Falsehood's die :
There, scan thy actions ; set thy notions right ;
And make thy hope of future bliss, more bright :
For *these* each brook may serve ; each verdant mead ;
And thou, by *these*, excel the neighb'ring steed.

Behold ! thy num'rous flocks obedient stand,
To pay their anual tribute to thy hand !

Thy

THE BOOK OF NATURE. 13

Thy swelling corn, in beauteous order grow ;
And, like some undulating ocean, show! —
Are all thy thoughts alone on profit set ?
What price thy wool may bear ? and, what thy wheat ?
Forgetful, whose the right, with thee to share ?
From whence they came ? and in whose hand they are ?
Bethink thyself ; — pay thou thy tribute too ;
And give to God, and man, what is their due :
'Tis to curtail the blessings heav'n pours down,
To centre all the good, in *self* alone :
The finer parts, the parts that were design'd
For " food and gladness " for th' immortal mind,
Are lost and gone ; — the husk alone which stays,
When want's deny'd its share ; and God his praise.

Can feeble age no benefits bestow ?
An aggregate alone, of guilt, and woe ?
Sick of itself ; and wearying all around ?
At best a log, that cumpers but the ground !

This

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This all the fruit of threescore years and ten ?
 Of parts, of learning, leisure, labour, pain ?
 Turn to that vine, and hear it ask the aid
 Of foreign strength, to raise its languid head ;
 Support its branches ; lead it on its course,
 And be its guard against injurious force :
 Though helpless, weak, it far from useless lives ;
 The purple clusters to thy hand it gives ;
 A cordial to the mind worn down with care,
 That kindly helps the ills of life to bear ;
 Inspires the generous thought, the noble aim,
 And prompts to deeds of more than mortal fame.
 What though the almond-tree be silver'd o'er ;
 And, trembling stand, the keepers at the door ;
 The strong men, bow themselves ; the grinders, cease ;
 And fears alarm, when all abroad, is peace ,
 Though yon bright sun, no longer can delight ;
 Unfelt its influence, as debarr'd its sight ;

Though

Though the light grasshopper a burden grows;
 And the small wren can rob thee of repose;
 Desires all fled; music no joy afford;
 Just broke the golden bowl; just loos'd the silver cord;
 Yet Patience, Resignation, still are thine:
 Thro' the dark eye-ball heav'n born Faith may shine;
 A lamp to lighten others in their way;
 And cheer them onward, to the realms of day:
 Too late the rules of living to supply;
 The hoary head should teach us how to die.

Ye lovely maids! ye lillies of our land:
 As fair;—as frail!—can ye a while suspend
 The thoughts of Masques, of Operas, Jubilees,
 Almac's, Cornely's, Concerts, Coteries,
 Cards, Plays, and Puppet-shews—a monstrous train!
 Enough to turn or male, or female brain;
 Thanks to those virtuous lovers of mankind,
 Who take such pains, t' improve the ductile mind!

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Is Nature's Book, an utter blank for you?
 No truths impart? no objects set to view?
 Look on this gay parterre;—here recognize
 Yourself, your Friends, your Lovers:—Thought-
 less rise.

These blooming flowers; thoughtless, live their day;
 Please for a moment; and the next decay:
 Can *you* no more than *these*?—Beshrew the waste
 Of glorious faculties!—while thus embas'd,
 Submit to rank beneath them:—They fulfil
 The part assign'd them by their Maker's will:
 Bring glory, not dishonour to his name;
 And, free from guilt, incur nor pain, nor shame:
 Silent return to their own native dust:
 You wish it,—but how vain! for, *Live you must*.

Consider well yon chrystal rivulet;
 Its banks on either side with flow'rs beset:
 The stream and borders move us with delight,
 The noise, soft-murmuring, does to sleep invite.

But,

But, is it only to invite repose,
 Or please the sense, that brook meand'ring flows?
 With careless ease, half-slumb'ring can'st thou lie,
 And, uninstructed, hear it passing by?
 Awake, and make it meditation's theme;
 And learn true wisdom from the purling stream:
 See, how unwearied, it pursues its course;
 Avoids, or triumphs o'er opposing force;
 Though often interrupted, on it flows,
 And healthful verdure round its border throws;
 Through various windings makes its destin'd way;
 Nor ever deviates, when it seems to stray:
 Learn hence, that virtue never should stand still, }
 But hasten forward, like yon chrystal rill, }
 Some good dispensing, or, removing ill: }
 No opposition sep'rate from its source;
 No foul impurities obstruct its course;
 More broad, more deep, as nearer to combine
 With its original; *its source divine.*

Here

Here copious rivers their rich stores dispense
And flow great emblems of Benevolence ;
Which to the mind this useful truth may show,
That wealth is giv'n us chiefly to bestow :
There, lofty cedars, and tall pines arise,
And lift the soaring thoughts above the skies :
Beneath, the lowly shrub, with od'rous scent,
Bids us be humble, grateful, and content.
Go to the ant, and learn her industry :
The dog, — and copy his fidelity ;
Each prudent husbandman shall teach thee skill ;
They break the clods, break thou the stubborn will :
Careful, they strive to root out ev'ry weed ;
Secure the fence ; provide the choicest seed ;
Extend the watchful, though not anxious eye ;
Yet, for success, on God alone rely :
Go Thou, and do likewise : The soil ? the mind :
Thy own, or those by Providence assign'd

To

THE BOOK OF NATURE. 19

To thy especial care ; weed, — guard, — cull, — plant :

What more is wanting, ask ; and heav'n will grant.

Thus all around, instruction may impart ;

And, thus consider'd, warm, and mend the heart :

Th' Almighty Maker in each object shown,

And, by his works, the God of Nature known ;

Known for a God of Wisdom, Goodness, Pow'r :

Ye sons of men ! or tremble, or adore :

And thou, my soul ! who through the whole extent

Of threescore years, hast stood a monument,

A conscious monument, of sov'reign grace ! —

Call'd into being ; — bid to take thy place

Among those favour'd candidates for heav'n,

Whose task is easy ; and where strength is giv'n ;

Where saving truths lie obvious to the day ;

And no fell Tyrants force the weak to stray ; —

To which should join, the tender mother's cares,

Her bright example ; and her ardent pray'rs ;

The

To

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The Friend — the *Friends* ! whom love, not int'rest ty'd
 In each, the sweet companion and the *Guide* ; —
 Temptations, spar'd ; — in rank, the wish'd degree ;
 And Agur's prudent pray'r fulfill'd for thee :
 If he, who ranges o'er his large domain,
 And views, with thankless eye, his rip'ning grain,
 His forests rise ; his path's with flow'rs bestrew'd ;
 Incurs the charge of foul ingratitude ;
 How much more thou, should'st thou forbear to raise
 Thy morning, ev'ning, midnight thoughts in praise
 For better blessings ? — *That* be far from thee ! —
 Who honoureth God, — of God shall honoured be.



F I N I S.